(b) and (c) Attempts at smuggling of arms by some militant groups through gun runners are going on for sometime. Our forces and intelligence agencies keep a close vigil in order to curb such activities.

Since the investigation of the matter has been handed over to CBI and the matter is sub-judice, it would not be desirable to make any further comments or give details.

Resource crunch hurts Army

1515. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Resource crunch hurts Army's war-fighting capabilities" appearing in 'The Times of India', dated the 6th May, 1998;

(b) if so, the facts alongwith the details of upgradation, modernisation and induction of equipment into the Army in the last decade; and

(c) the action plan of Government to upgrade and modernise the Army in keeping with emerging changes in military technology during the Ninth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government is committed to maintain adequate level of defence preparedness to meet any threat to national security and territorial integrity. Allocation to Army is made within the overall resource availability keeping in view requirements of national security and other sectors of defence and the economy. During the last decade, a number of proposals by the Army Hqrs for modernisation, conversion and induction of equipment have been approved and implemented. This is an ongoing process which would continue into the Ninth Plan.

Sub-standard medicines for Army Hospitals

1516. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quality and value of medicines supplied to army hospitals in the country found to be substandard, expired and unfit for human consumption during each of the last three years;

(b) whether Government have conducted any enquiry in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government against the officials and the firms which supplied such drugs and have been playing with the lives of soldiers; and

(d) the other remedial measures taken in this regard, so far?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) In the CAG reports of the last three years such matters have been brought out. Action as required is being taken in respect of cases cited in the report.

Trishul Missile

1517. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to pursue experiments with Trishul missile as a follow-up of recent Pokhran explosions;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) ongoing development flight tests of Trishul missile are not related to recent Nuclear tests at Pokhran.

(b) Deos not arise.